

Chapter 8: Rebuilding

- For Wilmington's African American community, the consequences of the violence of November 10, preceded by months of white supremacy rhetoric and followed by institutionalization of Jim Crow oppression, are difficult to measure but did include political and economic change.
- African Americans lost their political standing as a result of the 1898 campaign and violence. Disfranchisement followed in 1900; the Republican Party severed its ties to its black voters.
- Research using city directory and census data, shows that Wilmington's African American entrepreneurs and skilled workers suffered economic setbacks after 1898 but slowly rebounded. Low-paid laborers were the largest category of workers.
- Out-migration following the violence negatively affected black's ability to recover.
- Blacks who remained in the city created self-supporting community clusters within predominantly black neighborhoods with black businesses for black customers.
- Black property owners were a minority of the overall black population in the city before the riot, but property owners were more likely to remain in the city. No proof of white seizure of black property has been found, and surviving records demonstrate that African Americans continued to buy and sell property after 1898 without coercion or losing money.
- The African American leaders who remained in the city following the riot were older than their white counterparts, and, as they aged, leadership patterns changed for the respective communities.
- Analysis of city residential patterns for transition areas between majority black neighborhoods and majority white neighborhood identified several highly integrated neighborhoods before the riot. After the riot, integrated neighborhoods were smaller, and transition areas between white and black neighborhoods were pushed away from the city center.
- Changes for African Americans included an end to traditional Jonkonnu Christmas celebrations. Emancipation Day celebrations were cancelled in 1899 but revived in later years.
- An African American collective narrative developed to recall the riot and placed limitations on black/white public relationships. White stories of the riot claimed that the violence was necessary to restore order. The white narrative was perpetuated by historians.
- Wilmington's race riot marked a new epoch in the history of violent race relations in the U.S. Several other high-profile riots followed the model set by Wilmington, most notably Atlanta (1906), Tulsa (1921), and Rosewood (1923). All four communities dealt with the aftermath of their riots differently. Although whites in Tulsa and Atlanta addressed the violence, murders, and property destruction soon after the riots, Wilmington whites provided compensation only for the loss of the building housing Manly's press.